

MATERIAL MATTERS. From Fibre to Fashion

An exhibition in the Textilmuseum St. Gallen

June 6, 2020 – February 21, 2021

The exhibition titled ‘MATERIAL MATTERS. From Fibre to Fashion’ is devoted to textile raw materials, their production and processing in the clothing industry. Costumes and fabrics from 1800 to the present day illustrate the variety and beauty of textile material, showing their influence on fashion through the ages. The exhibition ‘MATERIAL MATTERS’, which is conceived in collaboration with the *Hochschule Luzern – Design & Kunst* and the *Empa*, is on show in the Textilmuseum St. Gallen from June 6, 2020 up to (and including) February 21, 2021.

Cotton is pleasant to wear, silk gleams classily, wool keeps us warm, and ‘poly-something’ is added: a quick glance at the label reveals the composition of the item of clothing that we are thinking of buying or which we already call our own. Yet what is hidden behind the superficial information? What raw materials are being used? What processing operations take place? What features do the various materials have? And what about sustainability?

‘MATERIAL MATTERS’ investigates the relationship between material and fashion with the aid of selected items of clothing from the last 200 years. The exhibition questions what influence such factors as specific material characteristics or the availability and pricing of raw materials have on fashion. But social developments and rising prosperity also influence the fashion industry, as do heightened ecological sensitivity and innovations in textile technology, and all these factors change our clothing habits.

One important area within the exhibition is the fibre cabinet. Here, the production and processing of natural and synthetic textile raw materials are examined in detail, from the fibre and the yarn, through to the material itself. Interactive applications, have-a-go stations and games draw in visitors of all ages to explore a complex and fascinating subject. One of the main themes concerns the environmental compatibility of the various materials and processes.

In times of fast fashion and cheap goods, our appreciation of the value of textiles seems to have got lost. The exhibition ‘MATERIAL MATTERS. From Fibre to Fashion’ aims to counteract this by informing visitors about the costly and resource-intensive production processes and by showing them the beauty and variety of textile objects. The exhibition runs from June 6, 2020 up to (and including) February 21, 2021 in the Textilmuseum St. Gallen. The fibre cabinet will remain open for the duration of the exhibition, until year-end 2021.

Curators: Ilona Kos, Annina Weber
Exhibition design/graphic design: Johannes Stieger, Michael Schoch
Partner institutions: Empa – Materials Science and Technology,
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Thank you!

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